The Evening World.

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TAX EXEMPTION PASSES.

AFTER four months of backing and filling, delay and obstruction, the tax exemption ordinance, forced through the Board of Aldermen ten days ago, was passed by the Board of Estimate yesterday.

It was high time. The building season is almost here and plans for new construction are far below normal.

The need for new housing grows more insistent day by day.

The sole object of partial exemption from taxation is to encourage the building of homes. Because of the housing shortage and because of the high cost of building material and labor, the city offers a subvention likely to amount to from $1,200 to $1,500 for present home construction.

At the end of ten years it is possible that building costs will have dropped so that the net investment cost of houses constructed now will be approximately on a par with both older houses and newer houses.

Whether exemption will give the necessary stimulus for the 1921 building programme remains to be seen. If it does not, the next Legislature will have to consider further plans for the encouragement of building.

At least the New York Board of Aldermen and Board of Estimate no longer block the one constructive aid for which the Legislature provided.

WHERE IS IT NOW?

Hi Johnson says New York will have to worry along without him for a few days over Inauguration.

We hope he's made plans to leave the palladium well guarded. Or maybe it would be safer if he took it with him.

OVERLOADED MUNICIPAL COURTS.

SINCE the passage of the rent laws last autumn the Municipal Courts have been swamped by the flood of landlord and tenant cases.

Congestion results in delay of all cases and a practical denial of justice in some.

The excess of new work has submerged the regular function of these courts in deciding cases of small debtors and creditors.

If it were necessary to choose between such a condition and repeal of the rent laws, there could be only one decision. The rent laws have proved their worth.

But there is good reason for a change of procedure in administering the rent laws. Several Municipal Justices believe the Legislature should grant them power to appoint referees in rent cases. The referee would take testimony, verify claims, examine books and then act as adviser to the court. Much of the work of the referees could be done evenings with a minimum of inconvenience to working tenants.

In actual practice the referees would probably be able to arbitrate a good share of the cases out of court and relieve the Justices of the overload of work.

At present it is a physical impossibility for Justices to get accurate first-hand information on the multitude of cases they must decide. The referee could in many instances do this, visit the premises, if necessary, and find out the truth of disputed points. Service of referees in rent cases would speed up the action of the courts and add assurance that decisions would be fair to both sides.

The Legislature should consider this suggestion and at the same time devise a method for standardizing administration of the existing rent laws.

Are we to infer President-elect Harding is in accord also with the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on the proposition that the natural course toward disarming and cutting expenses is to go right on arming and spending?

THINK OF THEM IN THE SUBWAY!

FIFTEEN Americans from the West, who helped transport a shipload of milch cows given to Germany by a relief organization, have been making what amounts to a triumphal tour of that country as guests of the German Red Cross.

They have been seeing Germany and Germany has been seeing them. Cabled accounts of the trip indicate that surprise and astonishment were mutual.

Prussian pomp and deference to rank and class meant absolutely nothing to these Western cattlemen. Municipal dignitaries in high hats failed to awe these modern "innocents abroad." They shook hands with brother farmers and talked about the crops.

One paragraph of the report must interest New Yorkers. The Red Cross conductor of the party is thus quoted:

> "Germans don't understand them. They are awfully decent fellows and polite in their way too. Every man in a party riding on a street car last night got up promptly and gave women their seats. The Germans on board kept their seats."

The trouble was merely a matter of viewpoint.

The Germans "don't understand them." Would New York?

If these milch cow Argonauts return to Kansas and Indiana and Texas by way of New York, what are we to look forward to in the subway in case the Galahads offer their seats to women?

Will passengers be dragged out in a faint, or will the cowmen be arrested as "mashers"?

More women than men, the Census Bureau tells us, in both New York and Boston. Poor man! He's losing his urban standing by even the quantity test.

THE UGLY TRUTH.

EVERY one knows that Nation-wide Prohibition has failed to prohibit.

But up to the present time there has been no such concrete presentation of the grim facts of the failure as The Evening World's survey of the actual news records of law-breaking, graft and crime during the attempted enforcement of the Volstead act since Jan. 17, 1920.

In this city alone, 5,813 arrests for drunkenness in the year 1920 as against 5,657 in 1919.

Thus does Nation-wide Prohibition diminish the intemperate use of alcoholic liquors!

More than $100,000,000 worth of whiskey released from New York warehouses on forged permits.

Thus does Nation-wide Prohibition maintain Government control of alcohol!

Smuggling and bootlegging on a colossal and growing scale; stills and private brewing plants multiplying every month; home manufacture of alcoholic drinks studied and practiced as a new domestic art.

Thus does Nation-wide Prohibition put a stop to the circulation and consumption of intoxicating beverages!

Unprecedented daily records of crime in its boldest, most violent forms; bribery and corruption pervading the entire system of Prohibition enforcement; private citizens of high standing and character jovially violating the law as a kind of new sport.

Thus does Nation-wide Prohibition lift the moral level of communities!

So it was bound to be, and so it is.

A law that cannot be reconciled with reason in the minds of temperate, self-respecting men and women is a dangerous law.

The strength of any law is measured by the respect in which it is held by good citizens.

When any considerable number of this class treat a new law lightly, their attitude has the worst possible influence on other classes who hold no law in high esteem.

That is what has happened in the case of Federal Prohibition.

Because it takes away personal liberty in a manner hitherto abhorrent to American ideas of the proper function of Federal Government, otherwise law-abiding men have evaded it.

Because law-abiding men evade it, unprincipled men disregard it entirely or make money out of it.

Such a law can work incalculable harm by lessening the respect in which other laws are held among classes upon whom the fear of law should act with greatest force.

When, on the plea of treating an ill that could have been cured by other means, the Eighteenth Amendment was jammed into the Federal Constitution, violence was done some of the soundest fibre and tissue of the American democratic organism.

The ugly look of the wound can't be concealed.

"Harding is in accord with Hoover" sounds more like it than t'other way round.

UP-TO-DATE SNOW HANDLING.

INTERESTED crowds in City Hall Park yesterday afternoon watched the demonstration of three different types of mechanical snow loaders.

Frozen piles of snow provided a difficult test for the machines, but all three did the work. Which was the best and most useful is for the engineers to decide. Very likely any one of the three could be improved by further experiment.

But that mechanical loading is both possible and practical is no longer open to doubt. New York may expect to see more of these machines in action next winter. Application of expert engineering skill to the business of snow removal has proved its worth.

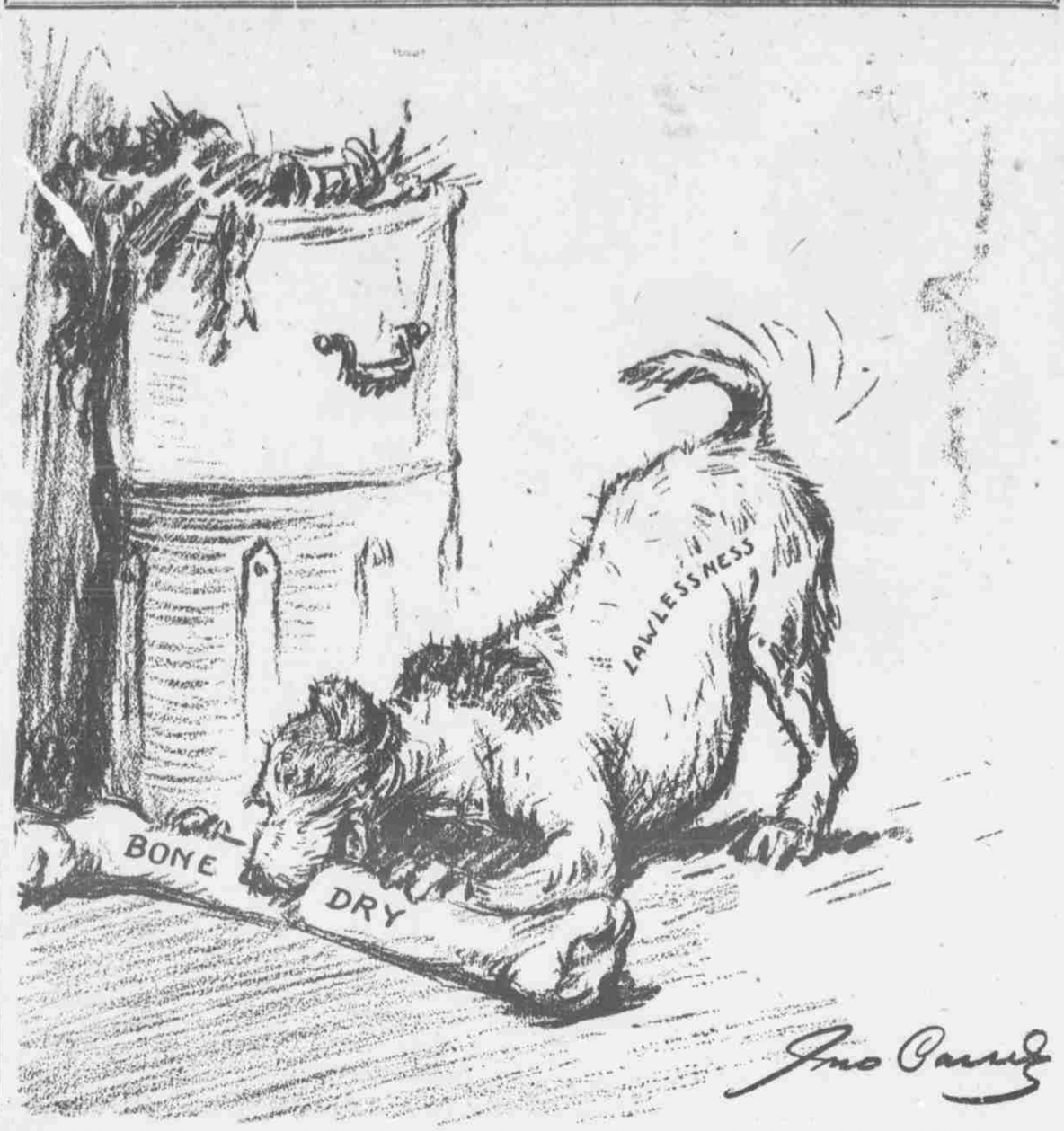
When the city was blockaded last winter The Evening World's editorial "Try an Engineer" was followed by the creation of the Board of Snow Removal under Chief Kenlon.

A year later The Evening World is glad to congratulate Commissioner Leo and the Snow Removal Board on the results achieved. The engineers when tried were not found wanting. Preparedness and machinery had the snow beat from the first.

New York will never go back to the old slow way of fighting snow. Keep the engineers on the job.

He Thrives on It!

By John Cassel



From Evening World Readers

What kind of a letter do you find most readable? Isn't it the one that gives you the worth of a thousand words in a couple of hundred? There is fine mental exercise and a lot of satisfaction in trying to say much in a few words. Take time to be brief.

From Bad to Worse.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

I agree with the subject matter of the letter you published from Dr. Davin.

I used to be a Tammany Hall man, and I am sorry to say I voted for Hylan. Never again—and I have quit Tammany for good.

All there is to Tammany nowadays is the Big Chief. He hogs everything, and the Democratic organization is going from bad to worse.

The Hylan Administration has fallen down all along the line, and the city is in the grip of a lot of political corruptionists who steal anything from a hot stove to a wheelbarrow. The only way to get rid of them is either to have the Governor remove them or have the people get together at the next election, regardless of politics and political affiliations, and vote the whole bunch out from top to bottom.

We want a housecleaning in New York City, and as a constant reader of your admirable paper I hope you will help the taxpayers get this relief. HENRY SMYTHERS.

New York, Feb. 23, 1921.

Does Money Make the Gentleman?

To the Editor of The Evening World:

I would like to answer Jane Wright and others by asking them whether the ability to pay 75 cents or $3.50 for a seat in the theatre makes of a roughneck a gentleman? On $22 a week I have been in but one theatre in Manhattan since 1896. I have a wife and six children to support and can't afford it. M. B.

Brooklyn, Feb. 21, 1921.

The Engineer's Pay.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

May I reply to "A Former Passenger" whose letter on railroad wages and fares you printed Feb. 18, 1921.

Every fair minded man will side with Warren S. Stone when he understands the situation.

Let all our readers, including "A Former Passenger" weigh well these facts I relate in regard to a locomotive engineer who is looked upon as a bandit by this "Former Passenger."

During the war unskilled labor was receiving from 60 to 80 cents per hour, instead of $1.50 to $2 a day as in 1914. Tradesmen and skilled laborers were receiving $1 to $1.35 per hour, compared with $4 to $6 a day in 1914. The engineer who pulled the train that this "Former Passenger" rode in, if he was a commuter, which I suppose he was, received on an average of $5.68 for his first ten hours and 73 cents an hour for overtime providing he made less than 100 miles. If he made miles to exceed 100 he received 5.68 cents per mile over 100 in addition. After waiting two years living on hope, hustle and hash, he received 40 cents per day increase, which brought the average engineer in commuter service pay per day of ten hours to $6.48, with the same ratio for overtime and miles in excess of 100. How does this compare with the carpenter, plumber, painter or mason with their $9 to $10 per day of eight hours? Stop and think that the man who pulls your train is only one out of about eight boys who started in the game with the expectation of some day sitting on the right side of a locomotive. Only about forty out of 100 boys who start life as firemen stick at it long enough to be promoted to engineer. About ten out of this forty become successful passenger engineers. American youths will seldom put up with the hard work and hardships long enough to sit on the right side of a locomotive.

I started to fire a locomotive at the age of 22. After eight long years I was promoted to an engineer. How easy it looks on paper, but six years out of this eight I bucked the extra list, never knowing when I would eat or sleep. When not on duty I was held in readiness, without pay.

At the age of thirty I was promoted. I had two years of regular hours and comfort during my eight years' service as a fireman. After putting in eleven years bucking the extra list as an engineer I was assigned to a local freight. My family grew up almost without getting acquainted with their dad. Now, after twenty-six years of service, I have a regular passenger run in commuter service. But remember, Mr. Former Passenger, I work Sundays and holidays, and when you think of an engineer in commuter service with a monthly wage from $200 to $250, think also of thirty days of from twelve to fourteen hours on duty. Have the locomotive engineers been receiving war wages, compared with other skilled labor, and in accordance with the responsibility and hazard of the occupation?

AN ERIE ENGINEER.

Suffern, N. Y., Feb. 26, 1921.

Snow Shovel Jobs.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

I made application for work on the snow last Sunday night and was told that they had enough men, but to come out Monday night and they would surely give me a ticket to go to work. Monday night I was told they would only put the men to work who worked on Sunday.

Tuesday morning (Washington's Birthday) I went out again and was told they had too many men and had to call in the night gang at 2 A. M. instead of 5 A. M.

In this morning's World I saw a notice saying that "Practically all of the moneyless and jobless men accustomed to ask for meals and sleeping quarters at stations of organized charities started work when the call for help was sounded by the D. S. C. and are still working." Now, Mr. Editor and fellow readers, how about us men who never ask for charity (but are sometimes moneyless), and who cannot get work on the snow when our own work is tied up by the snow? We want a square deal. JOHN J. WEBER.

New York, Feb. 22, 1921.

Jobs for Legislators.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

Men who sit at desks may get along better under the Volstead act than the men who are doing "a man's job" every day—I believe that men in strenuous occupations need some stimulating liquid refreshment after their hard day's toil. This applies particularly to longshoremen, coal heavers, stokers and firemen, truckmen, freight handlers, &c.

I would like to put all the Senators, Congressmen and other legislators who are responsible for Prohibition at snow shovelling, for instance, or as coal drivers and helpers. I greatly fear they would then change their minds about the harmfulness of drink, when its indulgence does not interfere with others' rights or prejudices. As coal-heavers, our fanatical friends would doubtless consider a drink of innocent lager beer to relieve their parched and dusty throats, no heinous offense, after all. "Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart." BOOKKEEPER.

UNCOMMON SENSE

By John Blake

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THOUGHT IS VALUABLE—DON'T WASTE IT.

It is thought that makes progress. Men first aspired to higher things, then thought out ways to attain them.

Thought has produced every invention that has contributed to the comfort of civilization. It has brought about every great reform. It has carried the human race from the cave to the modern city. It has produced art and literature and drama—clean down to the movies.

So you can easily see that it is far and away the most valuable thing in the world.

It is, in truth, far too valuable to waste. Yet most of those who have the power of thought employ it so idly and so unproductively as to gain no good by it.

Do your hard thinking about matters that count. Two hours a day spent in thinking how to improve your golf swing will improve your golf swing, but they must be subtracted from the time you ought to be spending in thinking out ways to get a raise of salary.

It was the women who thought about more freedom for their sisters who got the ballot; not the women who thought about the clothes they ought to wear for various occasions, or the social snubs they received while they were trying to break into society.

Find out what a man thinks about chiefly, and you can make a very accurate prediction of his future.

If his mind is on the box scores of the baseball teams, or the latest styles in neckties, he will be thinking of these same subjects ten years from now—and drawing the same salary.

If he is thinking about the problems of his business or profession and how to solve them you will find him in a bigger office, with bigger pay and more authority when you meet him after a few years.

Thought is productive only when set in channels of production. You can think all day about the population of Betelguese and never get anywhere.

But if you think for ten consecutive days about a better way to do your work, the work will show results. You will do it better and more easily.

Thought is capital. But capital can be foolishly invested, and so can thought. It is a gift that was given you to use wisely. You cannot afford to waste it.

Words From the Wise

Anger is a fierce and sudden flame, which may be kindled in the noblest breasts; but in these the slow droppings of an unfortunate temper never take the shape and consistency of enduring hatred.—Hillard.

In a free State it is not Capital that rules Labor; neither is it Labor that rules Capital; it is Justice that rules.—L. M. Notkin.

Jealousy is said to be the offspring of love. Yet, unless the patient makes haste to strangle the child, the child will not rest till it has poisoned the parent.

—Hare.

TURNING THE PAGES

—BY—

E. W. Osborn

I MET three Quakers on a hill,
And thee'd and thou'd with them until
I thought I was a Quaker, too,
And Quakers all the birds that flew.

And Quakers all the trees that stood
Like little angels being good,
Whilst Quaker thoughts paced through my brain
Like Quaker maidens down a lane.

Alas, a solemn goat came by,
And butted me, and closed his eyes
And not a Quaker I could quote
Would make him be a Quaker goat.

Reprinted, without apologies to any pacifist, from the "Poems" (Moffat, Yard & Co.) of Haniel Long.

* * *

The Comfort of Old Age---

Writing his book, "Why Die So Young?" (Harper) Dr. John B. Huber turns a tribute to old age, thus:

There are some very comfortable opinions about old age. For instance, that grand old man of science with whose name I began this book, Francis Galton, declared in his eighty-sixth year: "I find old age to be a very happy time, on the condition of submitting frankly to its many limitations."

Then there is "the justified mother of men," whom Walt Whitman extolled, who rests in her armchair on the porch, surrounded by her children and her children's children, while the rays of the setting sun touch warmly her whitened hair.

Serene she sits, her eyes steadfast upon the westerly glow, as the twilight gathers and the evening star appears, musing of many things in the past, but mostly of memories dearly treasured and fondly laid aside in some old cabinet.

And there was the aged aunt of Brillat-Savarin; when he was summoned to her deathbed he raised her head and induced her to take some "most excellent and restorative wine," whereupon she thanked him and sinking back contentedly on her pillow, said: "My dear, should you come to my years you will understand that the aged need death just as the young need sleep."

The doctor's words are beautiful, but we fear his trend is old-fashioned.

The twentieth century "Mother of Men" sits not in the twilight, but attends at the evening jazz.

* * *

The Perfect Lover---

From "The Stars in the Pool" (Dutton), a prose poem for lovers, the point of quotation being chosen where Flame sits at the feast on trial, as it were, before the eyes of the royal parents of his beloved Rosemary:

And for that all he said on these matters was shrewd and well taken, and modest withal, King Telwyn, listening, marked with gladness the manhood that had come to this youth, of the isle of sea-surge and firebloom. And he was right well pleased, also, that the troth-plight of his daughter was returned with clear eyes and noble bearing and courtesy and readiness for all that made speech with him.

And Queen Ellaline, in the wont of elder women, had eyes to the way of Flame with his wine, the which he took gladly, as becomes a man, but not overmuch; and she was content.

Rosemary, sitting beside her mother, the Queen, had thought for none but her troth-plight lord, whom she loved; yet marked with pride his thought and courtesy for all that sat at meat with them.

There was that in her which remembered with joy and tenderness how that he had thought aforetime only of themselves and their love; but now was she proud that her lord was become a man among men, for well she knew that with all he said and did in any wise, there ran always the music of his joy in her, and the love of his soul for hers.

Wherein we find counsel that to the making of the perfect lover there go temperance, courtesy, dignity and thoughtfulness for others, with tenderness for his own love.

* * *

And a Lover Who Forgets---

From "The Pipes of Yesterday" (Century Company), a book in which Frederic Arnold Kummer and Mary Christian contrive a love story from entries in the diary of a lady:

Saturday Morning.

To-day is the 14th of August, the date Grant and I met. We had dinner together that night, and I can still see him, so tenderly prankish and good-looking, across the big bowl of red poppies that stood on the table. Of course he won't remember it; I should be almost disappointed if he did.

Evening.

I always thought that I should never expect a man to remember things like that.

I put some poppies on the dinner table to-night. He said they looked very fresh and charming and that he had never known any one who loved flowers as I did.

For a moment I had a sickening sensation of loneliness—of having lost something very precious—then I went over and kissed him.

He was pleased to be kissed. How alike wives are! Am I going to be just as silly as all the rest?

I suppose one ought not to mind if the little romantic foolishnesses are forgotten in big, steady joys.

Which moral do these, our tale-bearers, point:

That the perfect husband would be he who never forgets himself as a lover?

Or that to forgive a forgetting is part of the day's business of the perfect wife?

* * *

Living Up to the Name of John---

From a tribute by J. C. Squire, in his "Life and Letters" (Doran), to the plain name of John:

There is no name like it. Fashions in other names come and go.

Thomas and William slump and boom. Geralds, Lucians, Marmadukes, Susans, Peggys, Margarets, Marjories, are the rage of a generation, and then became sickening to the palate.

A countess digs up the name Gladys for her daughter; in ten years it covers the country; in another fifty it sinks into disrepute; and then it goes on flourishing in dark byways until some new explorer produces it once more as a fresh and radiant thing.

But John goes on. From the ages when it was spelled Jehan to the present day the proportion of Johns to the total population has probably never fluctuated beyond one or two per cent.

Time does not make stale its infinite sameness; the most fickle slaves in Fashion's retinue cannot contract a positive distaste for it; in its dignity, solidity, greenness and grave mystery, it defies the weakness of those who tire of all things.

It is a name to live up to; but if one who bears it sinks into disrepute it falls not with him, but rather stays in the firmament above him, shining down upon him like a reproachful star.

A panegyric nobly planned and richly merited.

Yet when Mr. Squire goes on to list distinguished bearers of his favored name—not a mention of our countless friend, John Doe!